

The Kay House
Belmawr Township, Camden County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

The Kay House
Belmawr Township, Camden County, New Jersey

Owner: The Big Timber Creek Realty Company

Date of Erection: About 1730

Architect:

Builder: John Hugg (probable)

Present Condition: Poor

Number of Stories: Two and one-half

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - brick;
two older sections
Flemish bond, more recent
section American

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

This house is supposed to have been used to shelter wounded British and Hessian soldiers after the Battle of Gloucester. At that time it was the property of Colonel Joseph Hugg, son of John Hugg, Jr. from whom he inherited it. Joseph Hugg was the cousin of Samuel Hugg (NJ-284) and a descendant of John Hugg who owned the land upon which Trinity Church was built (NJ-85).

The wounded soldiers who died in the house were buried in the fields nearby; thus the house achieved

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the name Hospital House and was shunned by the neighbors who believed it was haunted by the dead Hessians. The story of the battle is substantiated by a letter written by Lafayette to General Washington from Haddonfield on November 26, 1777, in which he says:

"A scout of my men, with whom was Mr. Duplessis, to see how near were the first piquets from Gloucester, found at two miles and a half of it a strong post of three hundred and fifty Hessians with field pieces, (what number I did know, by the unanimous disposition of their prisoners) and engaged immediately. As my little reconnoitering party was all in fine spirits, I supported them. We pushed the Hessians more than one half mile from the place where was their main body, and we made them run very fast. British reinforcements came twice to them, but, very far from recovering their ground, they went always back. The darkness of the night prevented us then to push that advantage, and, after standing upon the ground we had got, I ordered them to return very slow to Haddonfield. The enemy, knowing perhaps by our drums that we were not so near came again to fire at us; but the brave Major Morris, with a part of his riflemen, sent them back, and pushed them very fast, I understand that they had between twenty-five and thirty wounded, at least that number killed, among whom, I am certain, is an officer, some say more, and the prisoners told me they have lost the commandant of that body, we got yet this day, fourteen prisoners. I sent you the most moderate account I had from themselves. We left one single man killed, a lieutenant of militia, and only five of ours were wounded."

It was largely due to the daring of Lafayette in this battle that he obtained his commission of Major General from the Continental Congress.

In February, 1778, when Colonel Hugg's mother was living in her son's home, men sent by Colonel Abercrombie (NJ-304), burned the house and farm buildings because of the active part taken by Colonel Hugg in the Revolution.

Joseph Hugg, in his will dated November 29, 1796, left the property to his son George Washington Hugg, who sold it in 1804 to Isaac Kay. William E. Kay, son of Isaac, sold it in 1865 to Samuel Lippincott. Its present owner (1936) is The Big Timber Creek Realty Company who bought it in 1925 from Andrew W. Mellon.

The Kay House was built in three sections. The western and middle sections, which are older than the eastern section, are substantially the same as they were one hundred years ago. The two older sections have two projecting courses on the second floor level. The later section is laid without these courses. In the oldest part there was originally two windows and a central door on the first floor with three windows similarly spaced on the second floor. Later, probably after the house was burned, the door was moved to the second section, which was probably built shortly after the first section was burned. The old doorway and the second window on the second floor were bricked up and the two other second story windows were raised three courses. In the older section is found the old rough hardware and the woodwork is crude.

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Hoffett

Walter C. Kuhl
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, A.I.A.
District Officer

per Jan-26-'37 T.T.W.